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POST-CONCILIAR CATHOLICISM ENGLAND: MORE CIVILIZED, LESS INTERESTING

BRIAN WICKER



POSTWAR WAR TRIAL

THOMAS R. MULLANEY

ON LOVING ANGLO-AMERICANS

MICHAEL NOVAK

SEX, DEATH & TANGO

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

RELIGION IN SHAKESPEARE

DENIS DONOGHUE

EVERYDAY RESURRECTION

ALBERT L. SCHLITZER

BERGONZI'S 'T. S. ELIOT'

JOHN D. MARGOLIS

EILIS DILLON

THE URGENCY OF HEINRICH BOLL



NEWS & VIEWS

Allies on This One

One of the more interesting but underpublicized reactions to the Jan. 22 Supreme Court decision striking down restrictive abortion laws was the dissent of the 62 Catholic scholars and theologians to the Court's contention that the unborn fetus is not a "person."

Many of this same group were critics of Pope Paul's 1968 birth control encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. Now they line up with the bishops on a point which is crucial to the bishops' own dissent to the Court's ruling.

Father Charles Curran, who was at the forefront of the 1968 contentions, drew up the statement and collected the signatures (working by phone at his own expense). "We felt an obligation to speak out now," he remarked, "and to illustrate that we do not always take a negative stand" with respect to the leadership of the church.

Curran commented that not all 62 of the signers agree on precisely when human life begins, "but we all believe it begins before the time of viability designated by the Court," adding "to be human is to be a person, we believe."

Signers of the statement included Father John L. McKenzie, DePaul University; Dr. Daniel Maguire, Marquette University; Monika Hellwig, Georgetown; Sister Agnes Cunningham, Mundelein School of Theology, and Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, University of San Francisco.

Curran, who is professor of moral theology at Catholic University, said the purpose was not to amass the greatest number of names, but to point up the theological conviction that individual human life exists in the unborn child.

The statement was brief and purposefully skirted legal questions involved in the

Supreme Court's decision. It follows:

"In the light of the recent decision of the Supreme Court on abortion laws we Roman Catholic scholars, many of whom disagreed with some of the practical conclusions of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on artificial contraception, affirm our conviction that individual human life is present before the time of the viability of the fetus. We therefore strongly urge others to accept this understanding and act in accord with it."

Three Catholic scholars declined to sign the statement—two because it wasn't strong enough; the third, so as not to be "associated with" those who dissented from *Humanae Vitae*.

Controversial Comedy

The protests of religious groups against the fare of three prominent TV comedy series may be having their effect on producers and on CBS, the parent network of all three programs.

Suddenly, Archie Bunker of "All in the Family," seems somewhat less lovable than he used to be. (The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, among others, has been targeting on "All in the Family" for popularizing ethnic slurs and for portraying Archie as a "lovable bigot.")

Also CBS is beginning to hedge publicly on whether or not to include two controversial "Maude" abortion programs in its rerun schedule. (In a two-part episode shown last fall, the lead character grappled with the question of undergoing an abortion, then decided yes—a decision which has put "Maude" under fire in many Catholic circles.)

No decision as yet on rerunning the abortion episodes, said CBS network vice-president John Cowden. He specifically denied that CBS planned to restage the episodes as "a one-hour special."

The third controversial comedy program is "Bridget Loves Bernie," which is catching it from rabbinical organizations on the Jewish-Catholic intermarriage issue. Network and program officials are undoubtedly walking on eggs after the recent detailed laying-out of the issue in the *New York Times*. ("Virtually the entire spectrum of American religious Judaism" objected to the program, said the *Times*' Ted Fiske, "on the ground that it makes intermarriage look 'mod' and thus mocks a basic teaching of Judaism.")

The protests, strong as they are, do not, however, appear to have significantly affected the programs' popularity ratings, a detail which ought to give the protesting

organizations pause in their reflections on how they are reaching the grassroots these days.

"All in the Family," "Bridget Loves Bernie" and "Maude" are holding their own in the top ten with viewing ratings of 36.9, 25.9 and 24.8 percent, respectively.

Vanity Publishing

The most exploitive idea encountered in a long time: Vantage Press' mail-list solicitation for "an anthology of articles, essays and opinions" called *Sounding Off*.

Vantage describes the project as "a rare opportunity to get your ideas into print and into public view."

The hooker: you pay—\$100 per page or fraction thereof. (Each page "can include up to 300 words.") For \$50 Vantage will include the writer's picture (you supply photo or snapshot). No royalties. Contributors receive one copy of the book "at no additional cost."

Odds and Ends

—From Lawrence Van Gelder's *New York Times* interview with George Wunder on the demise, at 39, of the comic strip "Terry and the Pirates":

"The war in Vietnam, he said, had a lot to do with the end of Terry, even though the hero was never a participant. He pointed out that the basic premise of Terry, who took up flying at the outbreak of World War II, was that of the fighter pilot, a breed that once had the image of square-jawed young men on a new frontier. The image, he said, has changed to that of droppers of napalm on women and children."

—Boasts That Haunt Department: President Nixon's comment Dec. 18, 1971, after the previous devaluation of the dollar: "the greatest monetary agreement in the history of the world."

JOHN DEEDY



Liberation News Service

9 March 1973: 2

CORRESPONDENCE



Change at Woodstock

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Raymond Schroth's article on "The End of Woodstock" [Jan. 26] was knowledgeable, perceptive, sympathetic. One correction: the title. The end of Woodstock as a seminary need not mean the end of Woodstock. The decision to close the College's undergraduate theological program for the formation of future Jesuit priests would turn into a tragedy if it were to deprive New York of what Fr. Schroth accurately terms "a major Catholic theological presence."

It may hearten our friends (and dismay our enemies) to know that we at Woodstock are wonderfully one in searching for a continuing presence on Morningside Heights. I mean an imaginative, creative presence which would involve theologians not only in teaching and liturgical expression, but in profound dialogue with other scholarly disciplines and other faith communities on urgent problems of the day.

It would encourage us if the sympathy of so many friends on our demise could be translated into practical advice on new forms of life and (ultimately) active support.

(REV.) WALTER J. BURGHARDT, S.J.

The POWs

Great Neck, N.Y.

To the Editors: Bernard Sklar's excellent "Return of the POW" [Jan. 5] correctly judges this Administration's Operation Egress Recap (now renamed Operation Homecoming) as an effort to hide its guilt and perpetuate the myth that "to have fought in the war was somehow honorable or just."

I believe it is added evidence that the Nixon Administration (as well as its predecessor and most of the American people) cares not one whit for the men who were compelled to serve in Vietnam.

(Continued on page 20)

NEWS & VIEWS: 2

EDITORIALS: 3

CORRESPONDENCE: 3

CAMDEN'S POSTWAR WAR TRIAL: Thomas R. Mullaney 4
ON LOVING ANGLO-AMERICANS: Michael Novak 6
POST-CONCILIAR CATHOLICISM: ENGLAND; MORE CIVILIZED, LESS INTERESTING: Brian Wicker 7
THE URGENCY OF HEINRICH BOLL: Eilis Dillon 11
VERSE: Caroleen M. Browne 14, Philip K. Jason 16
THE SCREEN: Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr. 15

BOOKS: Denis Donoghue, Albert L. Schlitzer, John Margolis, Elliott Wright 17

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'GOD BLESS AMERICA'

The Vietnam war will remain, as Senator Mark Hatfield described it in his brave remarks at the annual National Prayer Breakfast, "the sin that scarred our national soul." No matter how much the President insists that we have both achieved peace and retained our honor, in time (as we have stressed before) the realization will grow that—however honorable the motives of many fighting men—the national honor was spilled away in the night skies over smoldering Hanoi, in the burning hamlets of the South, in the heroin deals in the slums of Saigon and the strategy sessions at the Pentagon and Camp David.

Yet, some of our honor may be regained, depending on how we respond to three connected political-moral issues. First is the reconstruction of Vietnam, North and South. The Administration, in language that reflects its value system, has termed this aspect of the peace treaty an "investment." But it is more than that. It is part of the repentance Senator Hatfield called for in his prayer. We must rebuild Vietnam because we must make reparations for our devastation of the countryside and cities. Thus it is disturbing to see anti-war legislators with reputations as humanitarian liberals resisting the rebuilding project. Some rightly question the President's sincerity—since the fiscal 1974 budget has no reconstruction money put aside. Some bristle at helping Nixon play humanitarian. His bombing raids have made the mess he would now clean up—using funds we might rather see spent on the welfare programs Nixon is cold-bloodedly dismantling or in the slums of Newark or Washington.

It *does* seem absurd that the same people who once had our bombers and artillery annihilate cities in order to "save" them would now drain off billions of dollars to undo the results of our salvation; yet we must live with the absurdity and find the money—preferably in the defense budget. This money should *not* go to American construction firms, or to those who would plant a Coca-Cola culture in the ruins of AnLoc, but directly to the war-ravaged Vietnamese people, particularly the refugees. With this in mind, Senator George McGovern's speech opposing the reconstruction of Vietnam was not his finest hour. We know that he is up for re-election and that his words may have been well-received in South Dakota; but Senator McGovern's great value to the nation during the last few years has been that

Commonweal: 3

he was a lot bigger than South Dakota—and the man in the White House.

The second issue is our attitude toward those who have fought. Our idea of a Vietnam war hero is Air Force Captain Michael J. Heck who, after his 156th mission, resigned from the service because he could no longer justify the “mass killing and devastation.” Yet, ironically, if he had been shot down and captured a year ago, today he would be another kind of hero—bombed with steak, ice cream and a new car, a Nixonian proof that the whole war had been worthwhile.

The point is that the returning POW's are collectively neither heroes nor war criminals. Their patriotism does not make their bombing raids right, nor does it justify the President's manipulation of the POW issue. But this patriotism—in spite of its distortions—does represent a deep residual spiritual strength, a potential healing power in the American people which could respond generously if only a decent leader would address it.

Which brings us again to amnesty. The President says he cannot “forgive” the resisters and deserters. But what kind of a man cannot forgive? Once the prisoners of war have returned there will be no excuse for evading this issue. Let George McGovern come home to those principles that inspired his campaign and take up this cause, and let Mark Hatfield join him. And let the church buy national TV prime time and campaign for unconditional amnesty until the prisoners of conscience have been returned. Then perhaps a resister flying home from Canada or Sweden will embrace his family and say, “God bless America” too.



Camden's Postwar War Trial

It was 2:15 a.m. that Sunday morning in Camden, New Jersey. Four months of planning were moving swiftly toward realization. John Grady, riding Terry Buckalew's truck, was expected to block traffic on 4th St. between Cooper and Market Sts., while Milo Billman and an associate stood ready to stage an auto accident and obstruct 5th St. Grady and Billman were to divert attention while eight co-conspirators scaled ladders and entered the Camden Post Office Building which contained the local Selective Service Board.

The eight reached the fifth floor and inactivated the entry alarm system. All the lookouts had given the “all clear” sign. The eight entered, broke into desks and file cabinets and began destroying draft records and Army Intelligence files—what one member termed “illegitimate instruments of an illegitimate war.” Suddenly, at 2:30 a.m., the lights went on and a voice called out, “Good morning, gentlemen. This is the FBI.” Scores of FBI

agents had been awaiting the group's raid for several hours, confident since they had planted an informer among the conspirators.

Those are the details surrounding the case of the Camden 28. Their trial got underway on February 5, 18 months after the raid. By an irony verging on the ridiculous, the courtroom is in the same Post Office housing the Selective Service boards.

What brings one to Camden for yet another anti-war trial? This is, as the *New York Times* reported, number 155 in the resistance chain. The case, however, is more than a number and may become one of the peace movement's more important trials, in a legal and political sense. It is one of the largest draft actions ever attempted. The group consists of four Catholic priests, a Lutheran minister, two former Franciscans, two VISTA volunteers, several teachers, an osteopath, a sociologist and one-time Congressional candidate, a supervisor for a Philadelphia automotive firm, an ex-Defense Department worker, and other young anti-war activists. There are ten women in the Camden 28, all Catholic graduates of such proper-sounding places as Immaculate Heart Academy, Mt. St. Joseph's Academy, St. Maria Goretti High School, and Maryville College.

The conspirators (from *conspirare* meaning breathing together) cut across many division lines of age (from 20 to 46), occupation, residence (Camden, Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, Long Island and Washington, D.C.). One barrier they failed to overcome was that of race; the peace movement has always been a banding together of people white, middle class and highly educated, a movement based on a different brand of “soul.”

The trial itself promises to be different. As one of the prosecuting attorneys stated, “this is more than the usual garden variety type of case.” Eleven of the defendants are representing themselves. When asked why he chose to gamble a possible prison sentence rather than accept a court-appointed lawyer, Robert Good answered that, “the meaning of my life can only be understood by myself . . . The purpose of a courtroom is a search for truth and the only way to inject the truth of my life is to do it myself and not be restricted by legalisms.”

Camden signals the probable end of the movement trials. The government's wrath, disregarding its embarrassingly poor record in prosecuting alleged conspiracies, has ebbed. The death of J. Edgar Hoover has removed a powerful burr within the Justice Department, while public sympathy is more accepting of the movement's anti-war, anti-racist declarations. Finally, Camden lays claim to two distinct traits: it is an anti-war trial without a war. Although the ceasefire is less than a month old, Americans are working hard on a speedy burial, even obliterating the scarring experience of

Vietnam, like Dachau, from our historical consciousness. And secondly, the case sports an FBI informer having second thoughts about his involvement. This sounds more like the synopsis of a new Michaelangelo Antonioni film from a Leo Tolstoy-Albert Camus joint script.

I traveled to Camden on February 4 to get a pre-trial sense of the city. Driving into town along Haddon Avenue, I saw a long string of row houses quite like those on "All in the Family." However, after a few blocks, I realized no Archie Bunkers lived here, only Lionels. Later, at the defendants' press conference, the Rev. Michael Doyle, a Camden diocesan priest and a powerful speaker, reinforced a feeling of neglect and slow death. He said, in an unmistakable brogue, "Camden is as much a POW as the cities of Vietnam . . . By our trial, we want to put Camden on the map as a bombed-out city." Sadly, he continued, "it's easier to build a bomber than to build a city"—part of the trial's political message that the nation's priorities are off target. Sections of Camden have been gutted, like Hanoi, yet there is no talk here of postwar aid. Instead, there is currently a federal housing freeze in effect, and the budget for fiscal 1974 promises deep slashes in social expenditures.

On the opening day of the trial, the prosecution moved to sever eight defendants from the case. This came as a mild surprise, since the group had earlier refused to plead guilty to lesser charges, contending that closed door deals were undemocratic. Speculation on plea-bargaining had run high before the trial, and one defendant did in fact plead to a reduced charge; another was severed from the case. With the prosecution's motion to sever eight more, the lineup stood as the Camden 18, with an additional severing to come the next day. Gropingly, the government was announcing that its wrath had gone tame.

While the prosecution weakened, the defense gained in strength. The severed eight rose to demand time to consider the "moral implications" of their departure on their "fellow brothers and sisters." The show of solidarity, the refusal to desert close friends to save one's skin, was impressive.

On the trial's second day, it was the judge who surprised court observers. Judge Clarkson Fisher had handled the opening session calmly, with occasional injections of wit. Within 24 hours, however, Fisher had imposed a "gag rule" on press coverage and ordered that no one connected with the case could issue written or oral statements to newsmen. He cited the possible prejudicial effect of wide publicity on the trial along with a desire to avoid a "carnival atmosphere." The defense, seeking to overthrow the news ban, filed a writ of mandamus in the 3rd Circuit Court at Philadelphia.

The fate of the remaining 17 defendants rests largely on the testimony of one man, Robert W. Hardy, the

FBI informer. He is Camden's Boyd Douglas. However, Douglas was merely an errand boy, while Hardy, the defense claims, was the real instigator of the raid. Hardy is a troubling figure. He was a friend of the defendants, yet an occasional informer for the FBI; a man of deep religious beliefs, and possessed of a fervid sense of patriotism and duty. Hardy could serve as an archetype: someone living in two worlds, torn between the claims of the kingdom and the power.

When Michael Giocondo outlined the draft action to Hardy, he was disturbed. Although Giocondo was a friend, Hardy could not excuse civil disobedience and went to the FBI. Hardy, now working for the Bureau, joined the conspirators and, in his words, "assumed leadership." The group, meanwhile, had decided to abandon the project because of FBI surveillance. With Hardy's arrival, the group's enthusiasm revived and the "Feds" dropped from view.

Hardy has since developed doubts about his informer role. The FBI had promised, he contends, to arrest the group *before* the actual raid, so his friends would face lesser charges. Hardy claims the Bureau then told him, "someone at the little White House in California" wanted to nab the defendants in the act of destroying government property. This complete reversal moved Hardy to call defense lawyer David Kairys and to file a sworn affidavit on his role and original intent. Hardy admits to providing 90 percent of the tools necessary for the deed; he rented trucks for simulated raids and bought \$20-40 a week of groceries for the defendants. He also entered the draft board and made a schematic drawing of the interior for the group. Finally, he alerted the break-in party on how to trip the entry alarm. Looking back on this activity, Hardy said, "throughout I actually wanted to just stop the action, but I think I became, unknowingly, a provocateur."

The defense will argue the issue of entrapment, that without Hardy's "creative activity," the raid would have flopped. The prosecution is not commenting on its tactics, but Hardy's affidavit has clearly damaged its brief.

The defense has indicated that it will make a jury nullification motion, a highly unusual act. Kairys will ask the jury to refuse, on grounds of conscience, a verdict of either guilt or innocence. He cites Revolutionary War and Civil War (Underground Railroad) cases where juries took this option and refused to convict any defendants. While the jury in Camden is unlikely to do likewise, such a move might be the fitting end to the Vietnam war. If a ceasefire allowing both sides to claim victory can be signed, perhaps the last of the anti-war trials should end on a similarly inconclusive note. A judicial "peace with honor," if you will.

THOMAS R. MULLANEY

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ON LOVING ANGLO-AMERICANS

MICHAEL NOVAK

A pleasant discovery has come my way. Anglo-Saxons are even more insecure and afraid than Southern or Eastern Europeans. One need not treat them as superior folk, wiser, more tolerant, more loving than the others. Indeed, one must be more gentle with them and more forgiving. Just now, they hurt from too much criticism.

I had not appreciated the vulnerability of that culture which even to this day seems to me both intimidating and a little foreign—the culture of the prep school and the Ivy League, the Social Register, the private clubs, and the higher reaches of finance and government. So convinced was I of the beneficence of Anglo-Saxon culture in America—of which I had heard nothing but praise in all the years of my schooling, whose rituals (Founders' Day, Patriots' Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving) had become mine—that it seemed like carrying coals to Newcastle to laud what all lauded.

I accept the homage of Gunnar Myrdal (in 1942) to the "old" Americans: "The others—the Negroes, the new immigrants, the Jews, and other disadvantaged and unpopular groups—could not possibly have invented a system of political ideals which better corresponded to their interests."

Yet in 1923 H. L. Mencken wrote an essay, "The Anglo-Saxon," which also illuminates a great deal for me. To be sure, Mencken's essay was the work of a superior man, secure, critical of his own heritage. "I am myself an Anglo-Saxon," he wrote, "one of far purer blood, indeed, than most of my half-bleached Celts who pass under the name in the United States and England. I am in part Anglo and in part Saxon, and what else I am is safely white, Nordic, Protestant and blond." This allows him, he notes, to be frank.

"The good qualities of this so-called Anglo-Saxon are many," he writes, "and I am certainly not disposed to question them, but I here pass them over without apology, for he devotes practically the whole of his literature and fully a half of his oral discourse to celebrating them himself, and so there is no danger that they will ever be disregarded."

It is plain to Mencken that the Anglo-Saxon belongs "to a genuinely distinct and differentiated race—that he is separated definitely, in character and habits of thought, from the men of all recognizable strains—that he represents, among the peoples of the earth, almost a special species, and that he runs true to type." Since colonial days, he has remained "almost precisely the same, in the way he thinks and feels, as his forefathers were." Moreover, the Anglo-Saxon "tends to show much less variation than other races between man and man."

Mencken is quite hard on his fellow Anglo-Saxons. Madness about "100 percent Americanism," boasts of never losing a war, and the like he attributes to their "inescapable sense of inferiority." He asks us to regard the inferior energy and creativity of areas of the country "where the Anglo-Saxon still presumes to rule," or where "the recent immigrations have not penetrated." He points, for example, to southwestern Ohio; to Appalachia; to the South and the West. He is exceedingly hard on lower-class Anglo-Saxons. Competition with other races, he notes, is greatly feared.

"Laws are passed to hobble and cage the citizen of newer stocks in a hundred fantastic ways. It is made difficult and socially dangerous for him to teach his children the speech of his fathers, or to maintain the cultural attitudes that he has inherited from them. Every divergence from

the norm of the low-caste Anglo-Saxon is treated as an *attentat* against the commonwealth, and punished with eager ferocity."

Such a trait is not universal. The Spanish and the Italians have quite different attitudes toward foreignness in their midst. The Frenchman, Mencken comments, "is the worst of chauvinists, but once he admits a foreigner to his country he at least treats that foreigner fairly, and does not try to penalize him absurdly for his mere foreignness. The Anglo-Saxon American is always trying to do it; his history is a history of recurrent outbreaks of blind rage against peoples who have begun to worst him." Think, too, of Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward the French in Canada.

Mencken writes these words in 1923, just after a period in which over 3 million Americans were reported to the government by vigilant citizens on the lookout for Un-American activities. His is a bold, courageous defense of immigrants and foreigners, and a marvelous spoof of Anglo-American pretension. I wish we had examples of such ethnic generosity among Slavic-American writers; and perhaps Mencken's friend, Louis Adamic, made a beginning.

Still, what is fascinating in Mencken's analysis is something I had scarcely expected: the sense of almost studied incompetence among Anglo-Saxons; their sense of inferiority; their quick ethnocentric rage. These, he asserts, are the ground of their projections of evil upon those of other strains. Mencken helped me to see Anglo-Saxons more sympathetically, in their weakness rather than in their awesome self-assurance.

It is of the essence of simple ethnic consciousness to believe that one's own morality *is* morality, and that the

(Continued on page 23)

POST-CONCILIAR CATHOLICISM: ENGLAND

MORE CIVILIZED, LESS INTERESTING

BRIAN WICKER

The British are not a religious and not a church-going people

First of all, let me put my cards on the table. This article won't and can't be objective. I have neither time nor competence to make a fully documented survey of the Church in England since Vatican II. All I can hope to do is to give my personal impressions; based inevitably on my own interests—which I trust are tolerably wide—and checked against the impressions of other people to whom I have talked.

I think the first thing to say is that, as a whole, the English are not a religious and certainly not a churchgoing people. They are not much interested in ideas or ideologies. They are extremely suspicious of anyone whose public life is motivated by a doctrine, whether it be Enoch Powell's political puritanism, Tariq Ali's revolutionary socialism or Malcolm Muggeridge's Jeremiah-like Christianity. On the other hand, they have an extraordinary capacity for absorbing and degutting political or religious innovations. This is where the real importance of British traditionalism lies. Institutions such as Parliament, the Monarchy, the ancient universities, the city mayors and corporations, the Church of England, the Trades Union Congress, all function as shock-absorbers enabling people to get on with the real business of their lives—trade, family, gardening and football. People like Bernadette Devlin or Ian Paisley, who come to Britain as MPs from Ireland full of exciting and heady enthusiasms, soon find themselves smothered in the cotton-wool of British democracy. They are helpless against so potent and benevolent an enemy, and either give up or get out. It's not that the British don't respect men of ideas or

ideals. On the contrary, they have a snobbish reverence for them, and give them universities and other zoo-like places to play in. But this reverence is rather like the Catholic Church's attitude to women: you put them on a pedestal in order to get them out of the traffic and bustle of the "real world."

Now within this woolliness, the Catholic Church finds itself awkwardly placed. This is partly because Catholicism has in the past represented an intellectual and moral intransigence foreign to the British temperament. But much more it is because the Catholic Church in England is essentially an Irish enclave: and the Irish are quite definitely foreigners. They are a people of enthusiasm, and worse still, they are liable to do something ill-mannered or even violent in support of what they believe. Furthermore they have a tradition, or rather two kinds of tradition, to support them in their foreignness. The first is their own history as a nation subjugated and mistreated by the British. This leads them to see things in Britain in a rather different light from the British. The second is their Popery, which provides them with a rival set of pomps to those of the traditional British institutions.

Until, very roughly, the 1960s the Catholics in modern England had a secure sense of identity resulting from the various factors I've just described. The English woolliness ensured that they were accommodated, tolerated and politely respected as people of eccentric but no longer dangerous habits. Their opinions were given a decent scope for expression but their fundamental absurdity and potential for arrogant intolerance were never forgotten. From this point of view, Catholicism was not threatened by English hostility; it was rather held together by a sense of being different. But

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Commonweal: 7

Catholics had other assets too, originating from their own traditions. They could claim that their own pumps were not only more gorgeous and outrageous, but much older and more venerable than anything the English themselves could call upon. The Church of Rome may have been an intruder in England, and its outward manifestations relatively modern and squalid (its churches for example): but you only had to look across the Channel to see that as a Catholic you had a place in a scheme of things far more splendid, colorful, and awesome than anything in Britain.

It is against this background that one has to interpret the effects of the Vatican Council, and the "renewal" associated (not always correctly) with it, upon the Catholic Church in Britain. To express the matter in an analogy, I would say that what was before a narrow, deep and clearly marked gully cut by a powerful and awe-inspiring torrent across the English landscape, has now become a much wider, gentler and shallower river with ill-defined banks and far less impressive scenery. This river is much more comfortable to row a boat in, but a good deal less exciting, than the old stream was. You are not very likely to get your boat smashed by the rocks that lie in wait for you in the river-bed; far more likely you will find yourselves boating with a crowd of other people who have come out for a lazy Sunday's enjoyment and from whom you are practically indistinguishable.

Use of the Vernacular

I suppose the most obvious effect of the Council upon the ordinary man in the pew is the coming of the new vernacular liturgy. But it is very hard to assess the impact of this change upon the Church as a whole. From the point of view of a moderately progressive parish priest, the change tends to be seen as a slow but sure movement towards a deepening awareness of the Christian gospel. With the beautiful but irrelevant accretions of the Latin centuries out of the way, and a new understanding of the Biblical basis of the faith and of communal responsibility that comes from participation beginning to emerge, it is often argued that the Church has moved out of the darkness of arrogance and prejudice into a new light. But whether this is so or not depends a great deal upon one's judgment of things that are impossible to quantify or even articulate. From my own impressions, I would doubt whether the change is more than superficial. Looking round the average congregation, I see little evidence of any profound increase of attention or sense of togetherness. Naturally, there are differences, not only between one parish and another but between the past and the present. But how much of the change is due to the new freedom that the post-conciliar liturgy offers, and how much is due to the personality of the

particular priest, and the general climate of the time, is hard to say. My own feeling, however, is that the vernacular liturgy and the other changes in public worship, by themselves, have done little to change fundamental attitudes and show little evidence of doing so. This is because, as I see it, the structure of such worship—the weekly Sunday Mass according to a set pattern—is incapable of having more than a marginal effect on anyone in the contemporary world. This is not to say it should be abolished: it is merely to state that we must not look here for any dramatic changes of attitude or behavior.

On the other hand, patterns of worship that can and sometimes do have dramatic effects—such as the Pentecostal movement—have as yet only a very minor impact, confined as they are to very small groups within the Church. I cannot say much about these myself, as I have not had any direct experience of them. What does seem clear, however, is that there is a marked swing among the young, especially among students, towards private and contemplative forms of worship. Sunday Mass is much less significant to them than it was: but prayer groups are on the increase. This is not, I think, mainly a result of the Council. It is, for one thing, a comparatively recent phenomenon: part of a general swing away from mass involvement, either in the Church or in politics, towards private or small-group activity outside the middle-aged world of established organizations. In this respect the early '70s are different from the mid '60s. The most immediate result of the Council—a result which was also, and perhaps more radically, affected by the world events of the late '50s and early '60s (the collapse of the Russian hegemony over socialism; the rise of Cuba and the third world; Suez and Hungary; the influence of Kennedy and Pope John as new liberal voices; the threat of the nuclear deterrent; the emergence of Mao's China into the daylight, etc.)—was the emergence of a new political consciousness and involvement among Catholics of the younger generation. The most notorious symbol of this in Britain was the magazine *Slant* which was a shortlived attempt to make a synthesis of Marxism and Catholicism within a British context. *Slant* never had a large circulation or a unified ideological platform: but it did hit the headlines, at least within Christian circles, because it was new, and represented a challenge from within Catholicism both to the traditional conservative pieties of the bishops and leading laymen, and to the inarticulate loyalty of the working-class Irish to the center and right of the Labor Party. But quite apart from *Slant* the '60s was a decade of organized, institutional activity and interest among Catholics. In the wake of the Council, organizations like the Union of Catholic Students, the Newman Association and others had flourishing programs of lectures, discussions and public meetings, concerned

especially with disseminating the message of the Council and with making its impact felt upon the Church generally. Political morality—centering particularly on the question of Britain's part in the nuclear strategy—was a constant topic of debate, in addition to the obvious questions of the liturgical renewal and its cultural significance, religious liberty, ecumenism, catechetics and the “new theology.” The '60s saw, for the first time, the involvement of Catholics as such in causes hitherto reserved to socialists, humanists, or



non-conformist Christians. There was a regular Catholic contingent on the marches of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; a Catholic—modesty forbids me to name him—wrote a column in that citadel of non-conformist liberal opinion, *The Guardian* newspaper; Catholics began to emerge without disguise as professors in such controversial subjects as philosophy and theology in the secular universities; practicing Catholics began to write symposia with such titles as *Objections to Roman Catholicism* and *The Committed Church*, and got them published by Catholic publishers, often in quite large paperback editions. Charles Davis edited *The Clergy Review*, and turned it into an organ of intelligent progressive thinking with a resident lay contributor. The *Catholic Herald* under a liberal editor became famous for its correspondence column, which regularly ran controversies on politics, theology and even ecclesiastical organization in which the laity took the leading role.

Most of that stuff is now dead. I suppose that the one thing which did more than anything else to kill it was *Humanae Vitae*. Naturally the publication of that document, and even more so the publication of the split between the Pope and the majority of the commission, caused an immediate furore among just those middle-class and largely middle-aged people who had been in the forefront of the new wave of progressive, organized Catholicism. They did their homework in subjecting the encyclical to close, damaging criticism and led what revolt there was against its implementation. But inevitably, in doing this they alienated the older, more conservative but yet open-minded generation who were willing to liberalize the Church but not to tear down what they considered a keystone of their faith. Many of the organizations which had flourished in the

early '60s began to decline in the wake of this split, to be replaced by newer and (in my opinion) less valuable ones. Thus much of the energy of the Newman Association—the principal organization of Catholic university graduates—passed over into the Catholic Renewal Movement, which was formed in the first place to challenge *Humanae Vitae* and the kind of theology which underpinned it. On the other side, organizations like *Pro Fide* began to form up to reinstate the old closed world of tribal Catholicism, and to scrutinize the work and credentials of the progressives. Priests caught in the middle, like Charles Davis, were forced out by the pressures, either through disillusionment with the whole institutional setup or by the conflict between personal belief and the adherence to the Pope's doctrine. Others were silenced for the time being, like Herbert McCabe, editor of the Dominican periodical *New Blackfriars* (which he had succeeded in turning into a very exciting organ of theological and other opinions).

However, in the long run, I think the main effect of *Humanae Vitae*, and of the apparent reimposition of a centralized and authoritarian mode of thinking and feeling that underlay it, will be revealed—indeed is being revealed—among the younger generation. For to them it symbolized the irrelevance, irresponsibility and insensitivity of the institutional Church to the important issues of the day, its obsession with trivialities and with the maintenance of organizational loyalty. *Humanae Vitae* was a symptom of the superficiality of the Council. It simply showed that much of the Council's work was window-dressing: for when a real issue arose, involving human life and death, all the Church could come up with was the old tired clichés. The conclusion to be drawn from this was not that a new concept of ecclesiastical authority and its exercise was needed (the typical middle-aged progressive's response) but that the Church, as an organization, was irrelevant. Hence the retreat into a world of private religion: a religion that is still Catholic in inspiration to a large extent, but which is uninterested not only in the Church as such, but in the intellectual preoccupations of traditional Catholic theology.

So much for generalities. It is time now for a look at a few of the key places where the post-Conciliar renewal—or absence of it—can be observed in action. Perhaps the most obvious example, and the most hopeful, is that of the seminaries. I have had the opportunity to observe several of the major seminaries in England for the last twenty years or so, and it seems to me that the most dramatic and whole-hearted change in the atmosphere of English Catholicism is to be found there. Until the Council, the prevalent, indeed inescapable atmosphere of the seminaries was that of a “dim religious light.” The seminaries in England were built after the

emancipation of Catholics in the last century, and are mostly hidden away in fairly remote corners of the countryside, in prison-like neo-Gothic buildings of extreme impracticality that exude an odor of sanctity through every mullion and from behind every pious picture. If you want to know what they were like, then James Joyce's description in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the nearest you will get to it. The inhabitants fitted the buildings—indeed, they were trained to do so, that was what the place was for—so closely that it was hard to imagine any other kind of life being possible than one in which the swish of the soutane and the murmur of beads prevailed. The dimness of the light applied not only literally, but also intellectually. Although there were professors in the seminaries who were sometimes considerable scholars, the intellectual standards generally were low, largely because the syllabus was narrowly mechanical and secondhand and there was very little, if any, contact between the seminaries and other institutions of learning. (Geography played some part in this. I should also say that many of the houses of study attached to religious orders were much better, often because they were in places like Oxford or Cambridge and had the stimulus of an intellectual environment.)

Today, however, the major seminaries are transformed. To judge from the ones I know, I'd say they are now the nearest thing in existence to what Newman had in mind when he put forward his idea of a university. Or, to put it another way, they are more like what Americans think an Oxford or Cambridge college is like than any of the real colleges at Oxford or Cambridge. Today the seminaries are small gentlemanly communities dedicated to a variety of scholarly pursuits, with a strong sense of obligation to the surrounding world, in which the different disciplines are held together by a sense of common purpose and an acceptance of theology as a liberal and integrating study capable of welding everything together into a coherent and useful life. The rolled-necked sweater and jeans—uniform of male students in a cool climate everywhere—have replaced the cassock and the dog-collar. Even beards and beads are not out of place. Pop-star posters are to be found side by side with pictures of saints, female cousins and (just now) the treasures of Tutankhamun on the walls of the study-bedrooms. Record-players and transistor-radios constitute legitimate distractions. Marxist philosophers, Leavisite literary-critics, psychotherapists and social-workers from the mental hospitals and the slums descend regularly upon the place to peddle their wares before the students. The formal syllabus as such hardly exists: studies are largely tailored to the individual's needs and the professors' interests. Yet I don't think the seminaries have collapsed into intellectual chaos (as the *Pro Fide* people seem to think), and they are still very noticeably different from the theological colleges of other denomi-

nations. They have preserved a kind of communal dedication and coherence which is lacking elsewhere and which expresses itself, I think, in a kind of relaxed but not spineless friendliness, not only to outsiders but among the inmates themselves.

Yet, for all this, there are those who say that the seminaries have not really changed very much, or in the right way. That is to say, if they are nowadays more relaxed and intellectually more up-to-date, they are still places in which men are trained to fit the system, to fill its niches, instead of being trained to challenge the system. The Church still requires of its seminary students a readiness to go out into the parishes where the "real" life of the priest begins: whereas it is the job of the seminary today—so the criticism goes—to work out a critique of just that structure, in the name of a more relevant and radical gospel. For it is in the seminaries that personal formation via the parish, with all its irrelevance and obsolescence, comes into direct contact with serious study of the roots of the Christian faith: and it is there, if anywhere, that we ought to be trying to work out a style of life and a role for the dedicated full-time Christian priest that may make sense in the world to the '70s and '80s. So the criticism goes. I'm not sure if it is fair, or even true. The vicious circle is not easily broken. What does seem to me clear is that the seminaries are the one case where the work of the Council has borne fruit in quite obvious and dramatic changes that will affect the Church profoundly in the next decade or so.

If the seminaries are a success story, the "commissions," on the whole, represent a story of failure. The commissions were bodies, set up with more or less reluctance at national and—in time—at diocesan level to advise the bishops on various aspects of Church life and thus to witness to the new spirit of "collegiality" that sprang from the Council. They included such topics as ecumenism, education, international justice and peace, the laity, liturgy and Church music, the mass media, seminaries, missionary activity, social welfare, race relations, etc. They have been bedeviled by problems of various kinds: but the key problem has been the question of status. The commissions were made up, principally of three kinds of person: bishops and their representatives, men and women "in the pew," and experts. In some cases, largely because of the nature of the subject under review, there was no great problem about this. For example, the people "in the pew" on the laity commission were mostly chosen by the various national lay organizations. They thus had a certain base in their own organizations, they stood for a certain interest or form of action, and could contribute their own special experience. In short, they were to an extent representative. On the other hand, in the case of the International Justice and Peace Commission (for example), the choice of people "in the pew" was problematic. Many

of the laity who were interested in International Justice (e.g., the question of aid to developing countries) were already experts—they had worked in the field long before the Commission was set up. Yet those interested in peace constituted a tiny minority of eccentric persons with pacifist leanings from organizations like Pax, or people with a training in suspect disciplines like international relations. They represented nobody but themselves. Bound up with the status of the members was the question of function. Officially the task was to advise the bishops. But what if they didn't want to be advised? To what extent could the commissions claim to represent the main body of the Church, either to the hierarchy or to the outside world? The International Justice and Peace Commission recently came in for heavy criticism, both by some bishops and by a number of right-wing Catholic laymen because it issued various opinions about Ireland, Rhodesia and South Africa which—so the criticism runs—should have been the prerogative of the bishops' conference. But what chance would there be of ever getting any kind of concerted response to critical questions in the international field if such things had to be left to the cumbrous machinery of a bishops' conference? There seemed in this case to be a contradiction inherent in the very idea of a Commission to consider questions of international peace that could not act swiftly in the name of the hierarchy over matters which were necessarily urgent.

In short, the commissions suffered, and still suffer (despite a recent overhaul) from a certain unclarity of status and function. This stems, I think, from the fact that they represent an awkward mixture of Roman legalism and English pragmatism. They were established more or less by fiat, because the Council said they had to be formed, without proper consideration being given to local needs and the appropriate means for their fulfillment. In some cases, things have gone well, in other cases not: but this has more to do with the accidents of circumstance, the personalities involved and the timeliness of the subject, than with the theory of the commissions themselves as examples of "collegiality" or as sources of advice for the bishops.

If I were asked to sum up the changes that have occurred in the Catholic Church in England since the Council, I would say that the Church is more civilized and less interesting than it was. I make no value judgment, in saying this, as to which is more important: being civilized or being interesting. Obviously, it is necessary if an institution is worth having and worth keeping that it should succeed in being both. The question is whether Catholicism—and the *ism* is important here—can do so. I don't think I know the answer to that question. But, as Lucky says in *Waiting for Godot*, time will tell. But will it do so before the advent of "the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas . . ."?

THE URGENCY OF HEINRICH BOLL

EILIS DILLON

Determined to show what happened, no matter how ugly or distressing

Heinrich Böll has discarded one of the basic principles that most of my generation of writers grew up with: namely, that a writer must remain detached if he wishes to keep a clear view of his subject, that emotional involvement beyond a certain point will destroy his control over his material. Both his books and the long conversations I have had with him show that he is involved emotionally and every other way with the problems of Germany. Yet his judgment remains unimpaired. His colossal confidence in the validity of his point of view is kept sane by his delightful sense of humor.

The theme which informs all his work is the deadliness of bureaucracy and all tyrannous organizations, which

he sees as destroying the individual man, body and soul. Ragnar Gierow, the Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy which awarded him the Nobel Prize, said of him: "He and his generation were forced to breathe the air in a country where everyone's throat was in the grip of dictatorship and not a word was said because the grip was so tight that it stifled every sound. It is one of the postwar miracles of Germany that so soon after the holocaust and the years of hunger and desolation, a new generation of writers, thinkers and researchers was so quickly at the ready to take up their real job and that of the country as a whole, in rebuilding the intellectual life of the country."

The odd thing is that this rebuilding towards individual freedom was partly the result of conscious organization. In 1947, a formal group named "Gruppe 47" was founded with the object of reconstituting German

EILIS DILLON, an Irish writer, has just completed her fourth novel, *Across the Bitter Sea*, which will be published this spring.

literature, other members being Günther Grass, Peter Weiss and Martin Walser, who are also concerned with recent German history and with the guilt or responsibility of Germany. Günther Grass is probably the best known of these outside of Germany, for *The Tin Drum* and for his highly original plays. All of the "Gruppe 47" writers believe in their right to think freely and be themselves, without the fear of finding an official breathing down their necks.

Heinrich Böll's basic experience as a writer is the war. Born in 1919, he had intended to become a librarian but his studies were interrupted while he served first in a labor corps and then in the Wehrmacht. He was wounded three times but got back eventually to his native Cologne and began to study German literature, supporting himself meanwhile by working as a clerk. His first stories were published in 1947: already in them he was commenting on the collapse of middle-class society. Prewar German life had an air of continuity and stability, strange enough when one considers that the 1914-18 war had wrecked its structures such a short time before. But another, new kind of stability had appeared in the form of Nazism, and he makes it clear that he is deeply suspicious of his country's talent for rebuilding, after disaster, an exactly similar type of society with the same hazards, the same mistakes, the same characteristics as the former one from which the disaster grew.

His first novel, *Adam Where Art Thou?*, is a loosely-connected series of episodes rather than a novel, the whole giving a picture of the German army in Hungary at the end of the war, still hoping to rout the Russians, relying on the attitudes and conventions that Heinrich Böll hates so much in present-day German life and which he recognizes as being the attitudes and conventions of the defeated army. It took courage to write this when the national morale was at a low ebb and there was danger of seeming either to be deserting the sinking ship or else beating the breast in an unattractive way. It is clear that he is determined to show what happened, no matter how ugly or distressing, since the truth is all-important. His characters are bewildered at being caught up in the machinery of history, continuing to live the only lives they know even while they are being whirled into death. Over all there is an overwhelming sense of injustice, not only to the common people, who suffer most, but to their superiors who have been driven mad by the rôles that they are forced to play. Such a one is the camp commandant who was an unsuccessful choirmaster in civilian life and who now decides whether his Jewish prisoners will live or die, according to the quality of their voices. Finally a Jewish girl with a magnificent voice sings the Litany of the Saints with such intensity that the commandant, shocked at the anomaly of a Catholic Jew, as he thinks, shoots her dead and screams orders to guards to kill every Jew in

the camp, choir and all. This is a powerful, moving scene, written with great compassion.

As with many novelists who have something particularly urgent to say, Heinrich Böll employs traditional techniques—or as traditional as his great individuality will allow. He has no time to play with forms, finding those he knows adequate to his purpose. Still, the patterns that emerge in his later novels are by no means obvious. In *Billiards at Half-Past Nine* there is a deceptive simplicity in the situation of the main protagonist, Dr. Faehmel the architect, who seems to have withdrawn from life into deliberate oddity, to avoid facing the moral problems of Germany's situation before and during the war. Gradually it begins to emerge that it is the clearness of his realization of what has happened that has driven him into isolation, and that eventually he will be given hope for the future. Flight is no solution, neither for himself nor for the other members of his family. Three generations of them are introduced, the parents and children of Dr. Faehmel, all intelligent, conscientious, successful in their work but tormented by memories of wars and their attendant misfortunes. The structural pattern that develops is technically a masterpiece and seems effortless.

For me, the most revealing novel is *The End of a Mission* (1968). It has a perfect structure: unity of time, place and action. Set in modern Germany, it concerns the trial in a Rhineland village of a young conscript soldier and his father, both expert cabinet-makers, charged with burning a German army jeep in a public



place, accompanying the burning by chanting the Litany of the Saints and knocking their tobacco pipes together rhythmically. We go through the whole trial and soon discover that everyone concerned with it is closely connected, if not related, to everyone else. The judge's nephew is the defense attorney, his first cousin is an eccentric—or free-minded—woman who has for years made a point of attending all the hearings of the court, the restaurant-keeper sends the prisoners their meals to the gaol in payment for work done in his restaurant, to avoid taxes, the restaurant-keeper's daughter is pregnant by the soldier, the gaoler and his wife are close friends of both the defense attorney and the district attorney and their wives—in fact it's a sort of family party.

There is nothing ridiculous about the situation, however, and it is treated very seriously by everyone concerned, all anxious to see that justice is done. Now and then they forget formalities and address each other by their nicknames or in dialect but they return to a more orthodox line as soon as they remember. The humor comes from the fact that the father insists on telling the exact truth, as he has sworn to do, to the embarrassment of the District Attorney. Giving an account of his war experiences he tells quite freely that he never fought at all but "even during his basic training he had constantly been assigned to carpentry jobs, sometimes in the homes of officers and non-coms, sometimes in the battalion workshop." When the regiment moved to France after the end of the war there (question interjected by the District Attorney: "You mean the campaign in France?") The cabinet-maker replies: "I mean the war.") he had been first in Rouen and later in Paris. Because he was in much demand, he had been passed on to higher and higher levels, ending up working for a colonel—"nothing but Louis XVI: it was a craze of his wife's"—later on, a small carpentry shop in the Paris suburb of Passy had been requisitioned for him, only a small place but containing everything he needed. He had gone there every morning, done his work, and later taken to sleeping there.

Gradually the reader realizes that the innocent character of the father is disrupting the whole pattern of the Attorney General's attack. The only unsympathetic character is a Counselor from the nearby city, who has been sent there by a politician to observe the trial and report on the behavior of the witnesses, the prisoners and the judge and attorneys. In return, we gradually discover, the Counselor will be rewarded by the politician's support for a job to which he is entitled but which is not yet quite his. But his wriggling is pathetic—Heinrich Böll's greatest skill consists in presenting people from their own point of view, which must in the end be sympathetic.

The End of a Mission sums up his contention that the individual man with courage must fight an objectionable system even if he has no hope of beating it. The end of the novel shows us the pair of "criminals" acquitted, going off to spend the night at the house of the old lady, the judge's cousin, who has promised to assist them with their next "happening."

It is not in old people, however, but in the young that Heinrich Böll sees most hope for the future. He has a real understanding of them, and they have an immediate rapport with him. He likes their honesty and unselfishness and their impatience with convention, and above all their discarding of the racial prejudices and chauvinism which he sees as the most destructive element in the former way of thinking. As a Catholic he takes for granted the principle of the brotherhood of man, yet he has little patience with ritualism or pious practices. For

one thing, his sense of humor makes it impossible for him to be solemn, and long before Vatican II he had lost interest in ceremonial. One can see that this was logical in a German of his generation, who had been subjected to so much of it in the secular sphere. Besides, ritual appears to him to be a denial of the value of the individual, unless it is carefully used as an expression of solidarity in brotherly love.

A Refuge

In the early 1950s Heinrich Böll paid his first visit to Ireland, and soon afterwards bought a small cottage on Achill Island, one of the poorest and most desolate places in the country. It has been a refuge for him ever since, the exact refuge that he needed, where his temperament is matched by most of his neighbors: material matters are not taken too seriously but ideas can keep people talking until the dawn. His *Irish Journal* was published in 1957 but not translated into English until 1967, ten years later. He adds an epilogue to the translation, explaining that since the book was written Ireland has leaped over a century and a half and caught up with another five—meaning that one no longer sees the poverty that he encountered on his first visit.

He makes it clear however that the people have not changed, and he recounts how he drove across the country on the day when Pope John XXIII lay dying, and found that everywhere he stopped he was informed of the Pope's condition, by garage attendants and shopkeepers and bartenders, with a degree of personal sympathy which he sees as characteristic of the country. Another aspect of the same attitude he found dangerous—the personal sympathy for Hitler, who "can't have been such a bad man, really, just one who went a bit too far." This is more than Heinrich Böll can stand and there is an amusing episode in which he compares the removal of this delusion with the removal of a painful tooth, himself the dentist. He appreciates that the Irish like to think well of everyone, but he won't tolerate deviation from the truth.

There is no doubt that this passion for truth is the basis of his admiration for Solzhenitsyn and the very few other Russian writers and artists who have kept a tiny corner of freedom in their present totalitarian state. He has no respect for physical courage in isolation but knows well that it is a useful article if one happens to have it. He once described to me very movingly how he saw a Russian artist write a letter in defense of Solzhenitsyn, while his hand literally shook with physical fear.

Knowing that he has prestige, Heinrich Böll expresses himself energetically on any subject relevant to the responsible position of writers and artists in Germany and outside it. Often he is far from complimentary to his colleagues, if they show signs of jumping on the band-

wagon or losing sight of their importance as the conscience of the world. In this field, his most notable contribution in recent times has been in the notorious Baader-Meinhof-Bande case. This group of anarchists terrorized Germany in 1971 and proved extremely difficult to arrest and bring to trial. As in all similar cases—from Jack the Ripper to the Boston Strangler—ordinary people became unbalanced in a primitive way, feeling threatened by the unknown so that they were all ready to join in a witch-hunt. And as often happens, there was a newspaper, in this case a series of newspapers, ready to make use of it all in a sensational way. Axel Springer's group of newspapers, based in Hamburg and Berlin, began to condemn the group with screaming headlines: MORE MURDERS BY THE BAADER-MEINHOF GANG: ANOTHER BANK ROBBERY: POLICEMAN SHOT BY BAADER-MEINHOF GANG.

It soon proved more than Heinrich Böll could stand. In an article in the Cologne paper *Der Spiegel* he attacked the attitudes of the Springer group, pointing out that they were an incitement to panic, that they were an expression of the crudest form of fascism, that they were full of "hatred, lies and filth" and were an attempt to get the thirty million readers of the Springer papers involved in a witch-hunt against people who had not yet been tried, not to speak of being condemned. It was a

reasonable article: he pointed out that he was not defending the group, that the police were behaving extremely well under great provocation and should not be accused of incompetence, and that the real crime might well be the turning of thirty million Germans against thirty individuals who were entitled to the protection of the law. He suggested that one Axel Springer was perhaps more dangerous than this group of thirty anarchists.

Naturally the Springer papers retaliated by attacking him in full force. Day after day throughout the country, articles abusing and ridiculing him appeared, sometimes accompanied by cartoons showing him in the position of a fellow-conspirator or supporter of the Baader-Meinhof group. In one of these, the woman, Ulrike Meinhof, is shown standing to the front of a group which contains the other anarchists and Heinrich Böll, clearly labeled, and the caption is *Gruppenbild Mit Dame* (Portrait Group with a Woman), the name of Heinrich Böll's latest novel. As Axel Springer owns at least half of all German newspapers, including the only Sunday paper in the country and a number of popular illustrated magazines, the attack was a fierce one. When he wrote to me afterwards, I was surprised to learn how much Heinrich Böll suffered personally from it. The right-wing Catholic papers were the worst, he said.

No one exactly rushed to his defense. The articles and cartoons were published continuously for three weeks before the first of those in his favor began to appear. He himself retaliated in the most effective way, by quickly collecting all of the material, attack and defense, and incorporating it in a book called *Safe Conduct for Ulrike Meinhof: An Article and Its Effects* (not translated). For his admirers this was sufficient proof that he had not been and probably never would be vanquished or intimidated.



CAROLEEN M. BROWNE

YELLOW VIOLET

Hid in folded shade
of new leaves
still, outbending
near cool waters
welling from some dear
and secret depths
turning with new spring
winds
a yellow violet reaches to
touch the dozen dozen suns
that lie like shattered happiness
on the green ladders of the
fern.

COMMENT

Andrew M. Greeley on THE TABLET

"Any American Catholic who is concerned about what is happening in the Church beyond the limits of the United States cannot afford to miss reading THE TABLET. Its urbanity, its world-wide perspective, and its religious sophistication make it one of the most impressive Catholic publications in the English speaking world—or in the whole world, for that matter."

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THE SCREEN

Last week I was speaking of Bernardo Bertolucci as a supreme stylist in search of an adequate subject matter. Whether his ever more conventional scripts have been too cerebral or too melodramatic—and they have at times been both—they have never quite been equal to his powers of vision. But as everyone in Christendom must know by now, Bertolucci's new film, *The Last Tango in Paris*, has that most substantial of all subject matters: sex. Sex has always been an invisible subject of movies. It has been the one human experience for which every other experience has had to serve as metaphor. At the moment when the hero is about to mount the heroine, Hitchcock cuts to the train entering a tunnel instead. Just before Robert Mitchum pulls open Jane Greer's blouse, the camera tilts away to the door, which is blown open by a violent gust of wind. In place of the ingenue's hymen, it is always a crystal goblet that is broken.

But Bertolucci has made all that *passé* now. A classic example of a movie substitute for sex is the dance that the movies made world-famous, the tango. The tango was the twenties prototype of something to do in lieu of fornication. It is therefore no coincidence that Bertolucci in the end dispatches his lovers, Paul (Marlon Brando) and Jeanne (Maria Schneider), to a dance hall where a tango contest is in progress.

The sort of clash that develops between Paul and the contestants has in effect been going on throughout the film. Unknowingly Paul has been competing for Jeanne with a young filmmaker, Tom (Jean-Pierre Léaud), who is doing a sappy documentary about her. In the midst of shooting this documentary, Tom one afternoon proposes to Jeanne while they are sitting on a barge gate in the Seine; and in response she archly throws a life preserver into the water. The preserver has lettered on it "*L'Atlante*," which is the title of Jean Vigo's dreamy 1934 film about newlyweds who live on a barge in the Seine. The life preserver also sinks, just as the tango contest does when Paul steps onto the dance floor. As the dancers dart and swirl about him trying to maintain their composure, Paul, drunk, throws a gotcha at the judges. It is a gotcha thrown at the old cinemores by the new.

But Tom, the tango dancers and the *délicatesse* that they represent are only a sub-plot here. The plot is what goes on in that apartment Jeanne and Paul share. It is not entirely accurate to say that sex is the subject of this film. Bertolucci's subject is human relationship. Sex was more truly the subject of all those other films where sex itself could scarcely be mentioned and had to remain

implicit. Bertolucci's stratagem is to make sex into the metaphor—to turn the synecdoche around so that sex must now imply the larger relationship of which it is only a part.

In most of the pornographic scenes, for instance, while Jeanne is nude, Paul still has most of his clothes on. There are some obvious reasons, having nothing to do with art, why Brando does not expose himself. Though Bertolucci may well have asked both his stars to undress and face the camera, Brando had the clout to refuse. But directors have always had to operate under restrictions, and simply junking the Hays Code wasn't likely to change that. The point is that a director must wrest significance from such conditions, however extraneous they may be. This Bertolucci does, too, for it fits Paul's character perfectly that he should make love with his clothes on.

It is interesting that when reporters ask Bertolucci about Ms. Schneider, he always characterizes her as a woman incapable of deceit. This quality must be what won her the role of Jeanne, whose nakedness in *Last Tango* Bertolucci clearly intends to be psychological as well as physical. But Paul is the opposite: he is incapable of confiding in anyone and afraid of leaving himself vulnerable emotionally. He uses the apartment where he and Jeanne meet only for copulating with her, and he insists that they not even tell each other their names. The one afternoon that he does soften a bit, reminiscing about his boyhood in the States, Jeanne becomes very excited. She craves such human contact with him as his memories allow. But having revealed his feelings about something, he withdraws, leaving her to masturbate while he sulks in a corner. He will give himself to her as he did for a moment that afternoon only guardedly and with self-recrimination—like a man who makes love by sticking his penis out through his half-opened fly.

Just as there is another man in Jeanne's life, though, there is another woman in Paul's. She is his dead wife, Rosa, whose suicide is the reason Paul would now isolate his relationship with women from all human feeling. Rosa's suicide is another sub-plot, one counterbalancing Tom's romantic courtship of Jeanne. But it is also more than that. The two sub-plots together provide a background in front of which Paul's relationship with Jeanne is played out and against which that relationship must ultimately be understood. Jeanne brings to her affair with Paul a sexual innocence and vitality that are made more apparent—indeed, are almost caricatured—in her relationship with Tom. On the other hand, Paul's sexuality is perverse and moribund, and his wife's suicide reflects that. Between the extremes of Tom's youth and Rosa's death, Jeanne and Paul stand like the two faces on the Janus head, like the dual principles of Eros and Thanatos.

When Paul must go to view his dead wife's body, the ambivalence of sex and death in this film gathers over

the scene as clouds do before a storm. She has been laid out in their bedroom, the marriage bed serving as her bier, and she is dressed in a white gown that might well be a wedding dress. But like other aspects of the scene, rather than concentrate our attention solely on Rosa's life with Paul, this dress puts us back in mind of Jeanne. She has been fitted for a similar gown, in preparation for marrying Tom; and like Rosa on her death bed, Jeanne also misappropriates her wedding dress for a rendezvous with Paul.

We might even suppose that Paul feels the force of these associations between his grief for Rosa and his lust for Jeanne. As he looks up from the anguish that overcomes him beside Rosa's body, he stares into an antiqued mirror opposite the bed. This mirror reminds us of others propped against the walls in his and Jeanne's apartment, where such mirrors have come to seem a sign of man's inability to forget himself, to lose his self-consciousness, even in the midst of passion. The voyeurism reflected in these mirrors is in part our own, for no one can deny that voyeurism is what brings many of us to this film. But more important, the mirrors reflect the self-voyeurism that brings Paul to Jeanne—the voyeurism of a man who, growing older, is afraid his sexual powers will die like the waning amber sunlight of afternoon.

In any drama cast as a conflict between the life instincts and the death instincts, the latter must be assumed to win out in the end. After they leave the tango contest, Paul follows Jeanne home, and there, having now become frightened of him, she shoots him. While the scene in which Paul grieves for his wife is perhaps the film's best—and the most moving performance Brando has given in years—this scene where Paul is shot is the worst. Bertolucci stages the shooting in such a way that the pistol remains as unseen as Paul's erection was when he and Jeanne were making love. In fact, with the two lovers face to face in a medium close-up revealing only their shoulders and heads, the framing at the moment he's shot seems purposely similar to that of an earlier scene where they sat on a floor copulating.

Now that the lovers have left the haven of their apartment, the shooting does make a certain sense as a further equation between sex and death. But any thematic justification here is overridden by the scene's weakness on a literal level, as part of a story. Like the exaggerated, over-played stabbing of the professor in *The Conformist*, this understated shooting of Paul is a bit of bad Italian opera. That Paul should be shot at all is ludicrous. Moreover, if Bertolucci's sense of his script is erratic, so is his handling of Brando. It seems fair to wonder how much of a hand Bertolucci had in Brando's performance, even when it's good. Next to the scene where Paul mourns Rosa, for example, Brando's strongest moment is Paul's reminiscence of

boyhood. But in Brando's last film, *The Nightcomers*, a mediocre effort by a mediocre director named Michael Winner, Brando played a pornographic role not unlike Paul and had a scene of gentle remembrance quite similar in mood to the one with Jeanne. That scene is one of the best in *The Nightcomers* too. In retrospect that scene makes it look as if Brando rehearsed best for *Last Tango* when he rehearsed without Bertolucci's help.

On balance, then, Bertolucci is still a director whose scenarios and direction of actors are not equal to his cinematic style. But this is not to say that *Last Tango* is a disappointing film. Even if his characters do come to a bad end, Bertolucci has still turned film pornography into an art. This is a humane accomplishment and a considerable one. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.



PHILIP K. JASON

IN QUIET TIME

Still.

It is still.

The fresh blood laps
against my temples,
surf on stone.

I feel myself
artery and vein,
the intricate web
of carried ocean,
the flow and ebb
at wrist and throat.

I am cell.
Cellular.
And my skin does breathe.

Look.

The small pores suck
like querulous guppies,

and all is threaded to bone
—a bone tree.

Lord, I think on this
and death rubs near,
my shells rattle in a
shallow.

And as I turn inward,
thus,
I feel that I am kneeling
in the palm of my own hand.

BOOKS

Toward a hermeneutics of Shakespearean tragedy

Shakespeare's God: The Role of Religion in the Tragedies

IVOR MORRIS

St. Martin's Press, \$15

DENIS DONOGHUE

Mr. Morris' aim is "to find a basis for the theological interpretation of Shakespearean tragedy—to determine an area of compatibility, where the two disciplines speak in terms that are not mutually exclusive." In theory, there is common ground, amicably held, between dramatic critics and theologians. A play is a symbolic act, its meaning is not its conceptual force but its nature as an act. Theology is concerned with symbolic acts, and the words by which we register divine acts in the world. Tragedy proposes questions about life, death, justice, evil, suffering, chaos, and order in the soul. But in practice, the common ground between critics and theologians is a country at war. Critics allege that theologians who discuss literature have sinister motives and are only interested in perverting the work of art, dragging it behind God's chariot. In turn, theologians say of critics that their spirit is vulgar, ostentatiously secular. Mr. Morris is trying to rise above these quarrels. He is a scholar in English literature, he is also a minister of the Congregational Church. Naturally, he wishes to speak a language in which these commitments are happily compounded. The tragedies of Shakespeare make a proper scene of compatibility, for obvious reasons. Strictly speaking, a study of Shakespeare's God ought to face the difficulties represented by the Problem Plays and the final Romances, but I suppose Mr. Morris to have found difficulties enough for one book. He is striving toward a hermeneutics of tragedy, unless I have mistaken his aim.

The book begins with a series of the-

oretical and argumentative chapters in which Mr. Morris lays down the conditions for a fully engaged criticism. They are extraordinarily generous, such that a quarrel seems impossible. There is to be no reference to doctrine or precept, the tragic element "belongs to the secular, and must appear insubstantial in that unearthly light which would dissolve the conflict on which its significance depends." The theological implication of a play must come, if it comes at all, as an intimation "rather than as concept or doctrine," and must arise from the effect of the whole play rather than from any italicized part of it. "Theology has its beginning in what is beyond man, but literary tragedy is a human creation, inspired by mortal appearances and limited by its nature to secular terms; and, despite any more far-reaching congruity or relevance it may show, it is only to be judged in accordance with its nature." Finally, Mr. Morris declares that "tragedy remains dedicated to the human and its vitalities; and any revelation which it succeeds in making of some higher truth, it must make, as it were, by default—for the transcendent to which it may point is inimical to its own nature." These are handsome statements, and I imagine they will disarm most of the opposition which an aggressively theological attitude arouses. But they are campaign manifestos, nevertheless, and I am not certain that Mr. Morris is always determined to abide by them.

For the moment, however, he is full of peace and amity. In early chapters and at perhaps inordinate length he rebukes those critics who have tried to interpret Shakespearean tragedy in specifically Christian terms, they have done divinity poor service by making claims which cannot be substantiated. Mr. Morris then gives an account of the Christian understanding of evil, the nature of man, the concept of will, intellect, divine grace, the justice of God,

and the positive value of adversity. Mostly, he recites Augustine, Luther, and Calvin as texts intermittently parallel to the tragic experience. This section leads to a study of the rhetoric of tragedy, its general implications in terms of order, self, faith, meaning, history, dread, destiny, and so forth. Much of this is familiar material, and it is hard to find anything in it at once novel and true. I have no fault to find with it, except that it is merely a statement of common lore about the nature of tragedy.

The real test of Mr. Morris' position comes in the last major section, where he applies his mind to the interpretation of *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Hamlet*. I must confess that I approached this section with some misgiving: it is announced as "a theological interpretation of Shakespearean tragedy: the heroic predicament as the operation of the apostate will beneath providential ordinance." Anything is possible, I suppose, but this sounded like any other attempt to imprison four plays in one grandiloquent idea. I wondered what had happened to the peaceable man who addressed the meeting in the first chapter.

In the event, the practical chapters disclosed not a prison but a very odd situation. Mostly, the plays are discussed in the good old-fashioned way, the old-time religion of character-analysis. In the chapter on *King Lear*, for instance, Mr. Morris has several pages about monarchy, the Elizabethan notions of kingship, then a fairly straightforward account of Lear's character, minor disagreements with other critics, and so on. By my reading, there is not a single sentence in this chapter which is different in kind from the standard sentences in which critics without any theological intent have discussed *Lear*. The comments are entirely sensible, and very often when Mr. Morris disagreed with another critic I found my-

self persuaded; but I cannot see that there is anything in this chapter which required 300 preceding pages of theory and justification. Mr. Morris' account of the play is illuminating, but it has nothing to do with the ostensibly complex relation between criticism and theology. The proof is that he so readily engages in good-natured dispute with ordinary, traditional critics, Bradley, Granville Barker, G. Wilson Knight, L. C. Knights, and their respected colleagues. He speaks their language. I cannot find anything distinctive in his voice which I may ascribe to his theology.

In the chapter on *Hamlet*, on the other hand, Mr. Morris writes as if he were just now remembering his second commitment and felt determined to make the most of it, at the end. Having rebuked the religionists for taking possession of Shakespeare's tragedies without sufficient cause, he now does precisely the same thing in his own right. Of Hamlet's "inaction in the task of revenge" he says that "its possible religious connotation may suggest—without being able in any way to prove—the presence in Hamlet of the charity which is not a natural constituent of the human soul, but can only be infused from beyond it." But such a suggestion can neither be verified nor disproved; it is pure speculation. I cannot think of anything to support it in the text, though twenty passages may be recited against it, including Hamlet's "How all occasions do inform against me." Again when Hamlet speaks, in Act 3 Scene I, of "the dread of something after death" which "makes us rather bear those ills we have / Than fly to others that we know not of," Mr. Morris comments that "the inhibiting of aggressive purpose may conceivably display a patience susceptible of religious definition," and goes on to quote Augustine. The trouble is that you need to exert wilful pressure upon Shakespeare if you want him to write like Kierkegaard. Mr. Morris' chapter on *Hamlet* seems to me designed toward that end. So the Hamlet of Act 5 is presented as at last a true believer. "That faith in God should

come to a nature like Hamlet's is not surprising; theologically speaking, it would be remarkable if such a perceptive intellect should fail to entertain it." I am not convinced. The chapter, like the entire book, is formidable, often cogent and vivid, but it does not, in practice, establish good relations between critic and theologian. The problem persists.

True Resurrection

H. A. WILLIAMS

Holt, Rinehart, \$6.95

ALBERT L. SCHLITZER

True Resurrection. Is there, then, a false resurrection? Or, false notions about human resurrection? Or, false bases upon which conviction about the resurrection rests? H. A. Williams in this book does not concern himself with the biblical and theological problems which agitate scholars today about Christ's resurrection in the Easter event. In fact he does not take the question of our own resurrection from the grave "on the last days" as the main target of his inquiry. If this does indeed have a place in his thought, it is only as a kind of corollary of another kind, or other kinds, one not reserved for "the last days" but one that occurs, or can occur, in the daily life of each one of us here and now. The resurrection for which Christians pray at funerals takes up the final chapter of the book—a chapter of remarkably few pages.

What kind of resurrection, then, occupies the attention of the author? It is the passage from death to life which we are able to experience in everyday life. We experience death on many levels of our human existence. Death of body—when we do not allow the body its full life—when, in the manner of Plato or Descartes, we hold that man is essentially mind, and in consequence that body impairs the life of mind and must be held in servitude. Williams insists (with good reason) that man is not mind-master-over-body, but mind-body, one being.

When body is repudiated, not permitted its own proper functions, when its desires are suffocated, man is that much dead. Man comes to life, rises from death, when body is integrated fully and harmoniously into the life of mind.

On the other side of the coin, the mind of man is dead to the extent in which it is not fully integrated with the life of the body. (One is reminded of the old saying, "Who wants to act the angel becomes a beast"—something less than man) But even from within itself the mind can find the source of death. That happens when it makes itself into a thinking machine, taking as it were Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and rejecting his *Critique of Practical Reason*. Would a perfect possession of Kantian "scientific knowledge" bring to man the fulness of life? Absolutely not, says Williams. To the extent in which other ways of knowing are rejected or neglected the mind is dead. For mind to rise from death to life it must be freed from such self-imposed limitations on its activity. "Scientific knowledge" cannot give the full life of the mind. Intellectual life is primarily communion, not data processing. We experience resurrection of mind, we pass from death to life, when we yield fully to the vital thrust of the mind to find our identity in the eternal Word. (There is something of Hegel in this latter point and something of Kierkegaard in Williams' insistence that knowledge is "communion." Recall Kierkegaard's emphasis on "truth as subjectivity.")

There is another kind of death which we all experience by reason of our coming into existence in this world by way of birth. Because of this our life from its very beginning is conditioned by, subjected to, the entire past history of society. The fact that we come into existence by way of birth in a family means that we are cut according to a pattern; we are molded into the likeness of our parents and of their forebears so that we not only look like them but we think, speak and act like them. By birth we are

fitted into cultural structures, conventions; we inherit a past which shapes our way of understanding and willing. Williams here comes close to a paraphrase of the Christian doctrine of Original Sin.

Conformity to convention, to traditional set of values, is lethal. We must free ourselves in order to come alive really. Morality cannot consist in conformity to a preconceived set of values. Rather, freedom demands the creation of our own values. Williams readily concedes here that he advocates situation ethics. But he sees no other way out. God created man in his own image. So man is most humanly alive when he too creates, creates his own values. Williams makes no attempt to reconcile freedom and law. Nor does he pause to qualify resistance to conformity. Agreed, there is a kind of conformity that kills freedom. But is it inconceivable that there is another kind of conformity which sustains and fosters freedom? To paraphrase St. Augustine, "Help me to love you, O Lord, then command what you will." Or Christ himself, "If you love me, keep the commandments."

Williams does point out that resistance to conformity can lead straight into another kind of conformity, one enslavement follows upon another. In the name of freedom and personal fulfillment men leave the priesthood only to fall into a conformity no less tyrannical: they take on a similar mode of dress, even to the beard; they will announce to the world their marriage plans; they parrot each other even in voicing their reason for leaving, "to find new forms for the exercise of the ministry." Young people today rebel against the conventions of the society into which they were born, protesting that they have no freedom to be themselves as persons, only to fall into the enslavement of another life-style: way of dress and of speech and so on. Williams fails to distinguish between the various options in freedom and conformity. In a vacuum we can neither create values, nor exercise true human freedom. Social conventions, traditions, come to us laden with

a mixture of good and evil: there is the dead past which ought to be discarded, but there is also the living past which safeguards and promotes freedom.

Having established to his satisfaction that all of us experience resurrection from death on one level of life or other, Williams feels that it is hardly more than an inevitable corollary to affirm that we can extrapolate to resurrection from the grave. These golden words: "If we are ready for life in the sense of being open to its power and possibilities, then we are ready for death. If we are aware of resurrection in the present, then we shall not be over-concerned about resurrection in the future."

Williams writes with a style that is clear and attention-compelling. The reader is almost compelled to dialogue with him: agreeing fully here; questioning there. The value of the book lies not so much in originality of ideas as in the way it is put together. One who has read considerably in this field of literature will find echoes of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, the psychologist Maslow with his "peak experience," to name but a few. Williams himself acknowledges his indebtedness to the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church. But all comes through the eyes and the living experience of the author himself. Truly for him theology is self-discovery. His confidence in resurrection comes from conviction about himself.

T. S. Eliot

BERNARD BERGONZI

Macmillan, \$6.95

JOHN D. MARGOLIS

Fifty years ago this fall, T. S. Eliot's most famous poem first appeared; and as Bernard Bergonzi says, "It is a daunting thought that throughout the twenty-four hours of the day a lecture or seminar on *The Waste Land* is likely to be proceeding somewhere in the English-speaking world." The title is by now a cliché familiar even to those who somehow escaped

that perpetual literature class, and T. S. Eliot's name is known to millions who have never read his, or for that matter any, poetry. No other modern poet has had quite the cultural impact of Eliot; none could like Eliot have lured nearly 14,000 "fans" into a football stadium in Minneapolis to hear a none-to-exciting lecture on "The Frontiers of Criticism."

But now, just seven years after his death, there is uncertainty as to Eliot's precise place in modern social and literary history. Some, like Bergonzi, detect a "decline" in his reputation. Yet only recently the conservative writer Russell Kirk confidently announced ours to be "the Age of Eliot, as once there was an Age of Dryden, and an Age of Johnson." In fact, it is not so much that his reputation has declined as that the definition of Eliot's achievement has become obscured. For those schooled in the classrooms still so much under his influence, he is the personification of literary modernism and cultural pessimism. For conservatives like Kirk, he is a hero of contemporary Toryism. And for still others he is inspirational as a Christian whose late-acquired faith found expression no less in poetry and criticism than in his active Anglo-Catholic churchmanship.

The explication of his poetry and plays, the exposition of his ideas, and the analysis of his literary and intellectual sources have been largely accomplished. But what remains to be done—apart from the biography which is not likely soon to appear—is the ordering and assessment of a career so various as to defy simple categories and conventional critical judgments. More than twenty-five years ago F. O. Matthiessen laid the groundwork for understanding in his *Achievement of T. S. Eliot*. Now in a book no less useful to our times than Matthiessen's was to his, Bernard Bergonzi offers a sympathetic yet discerning estimate of Eliot's abiding value a half-century after *The Waste Land*.

Let it be said at the outset, there is very little new in the fewer than

200 closely written pages of this book. Nearly all of the biographical information here is available elsewhere in a variety of sources; and the poems and essays have been discussed much more fully by other commentators to whose work Bergonzi, like all of us, is indebted. Happily, he does not share the proclivity of so many of Eliot's critics to *over-interpret*, and he admits unashamedly—and refreshingly—that among differing interpretations of a crux in Eliot's poetry, "I have no idea which, if any, is 'right.'"

Rather than the disingenuously ingenious explication of texts, Bergonzi attempts a comprehensive survey of Eliot's life and works. Refracting all through his urbane critical intelligence, he places the various parts—the poetry, the plays, the literary criticism, the social and religious essays—within the whole of Eliot's career, and that career within the context of twentieth century literary and intellectual history. Negotiating his way deftly among the "contrived corridors" of his work, Bergonzi demonstrates the fundamental unity which underlies all that Eliot wrote. The career is of a piece, and Bergonzi is willing, initially at least, to accord each part of it equal respect. "I find wholly admirable Eliot's assumption that the poet, though both learned and dedicated to his craft, should participate in a wide range of pursuits common to civilized men," he says; "that he should read Dante and frequent music halls, and be interested in philosophy and religion, sociology and politics, the ballet and education." This willingness to meet Eliot on his own ground is the first distinction of Bergonzi's approach.

Resisting, then, the tendency of so many of Eliot's more specialized critics to dismiss parts of the career as irrelevant eccentricities, he stresses the many ways in which poetry and prose illuminate each other and accords genuine critical respect to each. The seriousness with which he approaches Eliot's social and religious writing is evident in Bergonzi's readiness to point to excellences and fail-

ures there no less than in the poems, plays and criticism.

Understandably, as a literary critic Bergonzi prefers the early to the later Eliot; the poet to the classicist, royalist, Anglo-Catholic ideologue. He contrasts the "poised intellectual gaiety" of his early criticism to the "weary formality of manner, . . . the laborious spinning out of points" in the essays after Eliot became "enshrined, or imprisoned, within a new establishment that had turned his early *aperçus* into iron laws." In the *Four Quartets*, Eliot's most ambitious effort in religious poetry, Bergonzi finds "some of the flattest and least interesting verse he ever published"—a poem which is as a whole less than the sum of its parts. But *The Waste Land* remains for Bergonzi "part of one's lived experience. Even for a teacher of literature," he says, "it is indestructible."

One can quarrel with Bergonzi's specific judgments. *The Waste Land* may well in another fifty years be an artifact in the history of modern literature, a mere document of one generation's—or one man's—disaffection, while the *Quartets* remain as immediate as *Paradise Lost* or the *Prelude*. But whatever his differences with Bergonzi, one is grateful for a study of Eliot so incisive and provocative as to prompt each reader to return to the works and make his own assessment.

It is not quite the portrait of a lost leader that Bergonzi offers, but rather the picture of a man who, as Eliot said of Arnold, put poetry aside and "wasted his strength" by devoting immense amounts of energy to non-

literary endeavors where his talents were considerably more meager. "When the cultural idol has been displaced the voice of the poet may be heard more clearly," Bergonzi says. And surely it is that voice which Eliot hoped would remain. The plaque in the parish church at East Coker where his ashes are buried reads "Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poet."

IN BRIEF

Justification, Markus Barth, Eerdmans, \$1.95 (paper)

Two things distinguish Markus Barth's brief study of justification from other treatises on the subject: 1) The author seeks only in the Old Testament for illumination of Pauline language, 2) The narrative is set up in five acts (or days). I can understand how Barth can insist that the Hebrew Scripture was the major theological resource for Paul (although I don't think mysticism and Jewish apocalypticism can be brushed aside as casually as Barth does).

But I am bewildered by the five-day pattern. I do see that Barth is trying hard to dramatize justification as a juridical process—an event in which God quite deliberately judges, convicts everyone, suffers the penalty because no one else can, and turns judgment into gospel. The theology is standard neo-Reformation; the scenario puzzling.

ELLIOTT WRIGHT

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 3)

The most recent evidence of this was President Nixon's veto of the Veterans' Health Care Expansion Act. That bill was designed essentially to provide funds to permit the VA to attract with higher pay scales better-qualified medical personnel. It would also have coordinated VA and HEW research.

It all adds up to yet another myth,

REVIEWERS

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9 March 1973: 20

namely that America takes care of its own. If the assistance generally offered the Vietnam veteran is any guide then returning POWs are in for a good deal of frustration. MURRAY POLNER

Signals Over

Milwaukee, Wisc.

To the Editors: No doubt the women will have their say about Novak's piece of football *et al.* [Jan. 26]. Here it is, for what it's worth, one man's reaction.

I speak as a male who does not like football. It is possible to survive grade school while not conforming on this score. I remember leaving a football session in tears because I was being ridiculed by stronger, bigger boys. It was something I simply had to work out for myself, and I'm glad the instructor (to this day a friend) did not interfere. What is Novak's definition of "heroic" which he uses so often to describe football? Where has he been for the past few years when heroism described people who would *not* conform.

How can he say that he hates to see the "specialization of modern football" and then quite in the same breath call that "spirited" and (again) "heroic"? After that nondisclaimer he would like us to pretend that professional football has little effect on the rest of our culture, while he also says it is alive and well as public ritual? From his posture he could never deal with the outlandish incentives offered to people who play games in the light of Pope John's enlightened warning against remunerating people without regard to their contribution to the overall good of society.

It is okay to lose as long as one plays well? Come on, Mike. Our society doesn't believe that even where it counts. Politics. War. America is victory-nuts. Has Novak never met a hawk? or heard the justifications of atrocity in war?

As for Tanya, Mike, I think you have been catching more passes and reading fewer books: five years old is too late to begin giving a girl (or a

boy) a sense of personal identity that is not predetermined by society's understanding of sex roles. And the implied brutality in the "treatment" you gave Richie deserves some explanation in a magazine of ethical standards.

We men who do not care for football have something to say about masculinity that has nothing to do with muscle, power, might being right, the strong-arm and aggression. We are wary of assuming the role of forceful and dominant leader, when what society appears to need are examples of restraint, cooperation and a sense of humanity that transcends this team called nation.

If High Priest Nixon has declared football to be our national ritual and, Mike, if you need that kind of god, plunge right and get ground up. But pardon my conscience, that altar gets none of my incense. WILLIAM SELL

Evanston, Ill.

To the Editors: Michael Novak goes on from strength to strength. First there was his warm and magnanimous review several weeks ago of the McGovern campaign (a review in which his great modesty prevented him from making more than a brief mention of his own substantial role in the campaign); now, in the January 22 issue, there is his sensitive evocation of the world of football.

As one who participated in that "central ritual of our society," probably at about the same time Novak did, I know exactly what he is talking about. I too underwent, in the daily practice sessions, the constant struggle for transcendence, aided by the discerning comments of the team's spiritual director, the coach—"Get the lead out of your ass, McCudden!" (if any group of men understand "the dynamics of transcendence," football coaches do). I too felt the almost palpable sense of spirituality that envelops a team when all its members function together, a sense given succinct expression by our team captain at the beginning of each game—"All right you guys, let's

LILIES OF THE FIELD WE ARE NOT.



Remember the lilies of the bible? They toiled not. Neither did they spin. As Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor we toil for the young as well as the old, for the acute as well as the chronically ill and we care not for their race or religion for all are of the kingdom of God. Our feet carry us along busy streets, up and down tenement stairs, in and out of homes where illness, ignorance, discouragement and despair are sometimes permanent guests. Nursing, counseling, helping to keep families together in their homes as one loving unit. The Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor achieving the impossible every day of the year.

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cream those bastards."

Unfortunately, I usually sat on the bench during games (they couldn't attack my love for algebra until they could stop me from sitting on the bench), so that most of my spiritual exercises had to be done during intrasquad games; I had no difficulty at all in doing them when faced by the 220-pound tackle who usually played across from me and who—how many times!—made me part of himself.

Through four years of high school, all of us on the team grew in courage, wit, and the other qualities singled out by Novak as distinctive of the football player. What remains most vivid for me, I suppose, is the wit—ah, the wit! Those rapid exchanges in the locker room that would have made a Wilde green with envy—"How

they hanging, man—getting any lately?" "You bet your ass!" So profound was this growth that I think Novak is mistaken—this is the only point in which I would disagree with him—when he implies some kind of contradiction between a "'sensitive, caring human individual,' able to cry and able to be tender" and the kind of person created by the discipline of football. No experience in my life made me more able to cry than football.

I hope you sent a copy of Novak's article to President Nixon; I think he would understand it too.

JOHN MCCUDDEN

REPLY: That football for McCudden and Sell is a powerful ritual of the American civil religion is evident. That, as in other religions, there are many levels of appreciation is also obvious. That women are unfortunately not central figures in that religion is the point I was trying to make.

MICHAEL NOVAK

Christian Democrats

South Bend, Ind.

To the Editors: In the Christmas rush, we overlooked Michael Novak's call for "a New Christian Democratic Party" [December 15]. For the information of your readers, the Christian Democratic Movement in the United States was launched 4½ years ago—in June, 1968. Since that time, Christian Democracy and the goals and work of the U.S. Christian Democratic Movement have been introduced and explained at numerous meetings to hundreds of persons from around the nation. . . . We are associated with the World Union of Christian Democracy and I serve as United States Correspondent for Christian Democracy's international journal, *Panorama Democrat Chrétien*. "The Christian Democratic Movement, Inc." is incorporated in the State of Indiana, and we are registered lobbyists in this same state's legislature. We will be incorporated in other states as occasions arise.

Persons desiring more information

about the Christian Democratic Movement can write: CDM, 130 South Walnut Street, South Bend, Indiana 46625.

The Christian Democratic Movement was started in the United States after almost four years of studying Christian Democracy around the world. . . . In January, 1965, the Christian Democratic Research Group was formed, and it set three goals for itself: the establishment of a Christian Democratic Research Center, preferably at Notre Dame; the hosting of an "International Conference on Christian Democracy"; and the publication of an English language book on Latin American Christian Democracy (some books had already been published on European CD). . . . Despite initial University support, over the next few years to define a contractual relationship between the Christian Democratic Center (the word "Research" was dropped to shorten the name) and the University did not succeed. In the meanwhile, the Christian Democratic Research Group continued developing the Center, and the former went out of existence when the latter achieved a satisfactory level of operation.

Including its development year, the Christian Democratic Center now has been in operation for eight years, and as far as is known, it is the first one of its kind in the United States. As a non-profit, independent educational corporation, the Christian Democratic Center probably has the best collection of materials in this country on Christian Democracy. . . .

Persons wishing information on almost any aspect of worldwide Christian Democracy can write: The Christian Democratic Center, Box C, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556.

RICHARD P. GILOTH

Chairman

Christian Democratic Movement

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I do not count it immoral to bring such things into the open. I do not think that such openness is a contribution to hate; it is, rather, a first step in the process of healing. The retribution visited on me for speaking up provides ample fire for the purifying of my

White ethnics, too, are for the first time experiencing a kind of inner pride and a slow curing of their own self-hatred and sense of inferiority. They are organizing, usually in coalition with others. The appointment of Barbara Mikulski as Chairperson of the Democratic Committee on Party Reform was a major step forward. A national "Network" of sisters has been formed. The

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